

Utah Forester Receives National Forest Stewardship Forester Award

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11/13/2020



Natalie Conlin

In February 2020, Natalie was awarded the National Forest Stewardship Forester Award at the USFS Forest Stewardship Program annual meeting in Charleston, SC.

Natalie Conlin, a graduate from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, began her journey in natural resources as an intern with the United States Geological Survey at the soils lab in Moab. She then joined the USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection program, worked alongside the Colorado State Forest Service, and spent three years travelling throughout the Intermountain West. In 2002, she joined the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire,

and State Lands (FFSL) as a seasonal forestry technician in Heber City, eventually becoming the Southeast Area Forester in Moab where she provided forestry advice to landowners and citizens for 13 years. As of January 2020, Natalie was promoted to the state-wide position of Forest Stewardship & Legacy Coordinator with FFSL, a newly created position that combines two previously separate programs into one.

The Forest Legacy Program protects private forest lands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses (ie. subdivision, development) through the purchase of conservation easements. This ensures the land will remain forested and private landowners continue to own and manage their lands.

There are currently 30 Forest Legacy properties in Utah (covering about 78,000 acres), and FFSL recently submitted 3 new projects (about 19,000 acres total) to be ranked for potential funding at the national level. The recent passing of the Great American Outdoors Act is expected to bring increased funding to the Forest Legacy program, which would allow Natalie and FFSL to assist even more private forest landowners in Utah with protecting their lands.

"My favorite part of my job is having the opportunity to visit some of Utah's most beautiful sites in the mountains and forests throughout the state, and helping landowners protect and/or improve the health of their forests."